Simulating in-store lighting and temperature with visual aids: methodological propositions and S-O-R effects

Submitted by Emmanuel Lemoine on Thu, 04/30/2015 - 16:46

Titre	Simulating in-store lighting and temperature with visual aids: methodological propositions and S-O-R effects
Type de publication	Article de revue
Auteur	Briand-Decre, Gwenaëlle [1], Pras, B. [2]
Type	Article scientifique dans une revue à comité de lecture
Année	2013
Langue	Anglais
Date	2013
Numéro	4
Pagination	362 - 392
Volume	23
Titre de la revue	The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research

Résumé en anglais	Lighting and temperature are two important stimuli in sensory marketing. However, these stimuli have not yet been studied in controlled retail environments. The objective of this research is twofold: (1) to propose a methodology to infer the effect of different levels of lighting and temperature in a controlled environment with visual aids; (2) to test the impact of these simulated stimuli on environmental perceptions and behavioral intentions, following a S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model. This model postulates that stimuli should influence internal responses which in turn shall have an impact on behavioral responses. This research is based on the encoding and retrieval literature as well as the literature in physics, ergonomics and environmental psychology.In study 1, we manipulated lighting and temperature levels in digital photographic images, using relevant cues (illuminance and color temperature for lighting; clothing and activity level for temperature). A between-subjects design experiment was carried out over 387 respondents: two simulated levels of lighting (bright cool light and soft warm light) X two simulated levels of temperature (slightly warm temperature and slightly cool temperature) X three types of stores (jeans store, bookstore, furniture store). We found that, under these simulated conditions, the participants accurately perceived the differences of lighting and temperature levels, as we predicted. In study 2, the same photographs were used in a within-between subjects design over 110 participants and 330 observations. We tested the impact of these simulated stimuli on environmental perceptions (stimulating and relaxing) and behavioral intentions (intention to buy and intention to spend time in the store). Both a bright cool light and a slightly warm temperature had a stimulating effect on participants' store perception. Under those conditions, participants also increased their intentions to buy and to spend time in the store. The stimulative perception mediates the relationship between: (1) lighting and both intention to spend time in the store and purchase intention; (2) temperature and intention to spend time in the store. These results confirm the benefit of using digitally manipulated stimuli with photographs in controlled environments.

URL de la notice	http://okina.univ-angers.fr/publications/ua10684 [3]
DOI	10.1080/09593969.2013.781050 [4]
Lien vers le document	http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09593969.2013.781050 [4]

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